Playa Lingo: the Lexicon of Black Rock City

by BRYAN FINCH

Accidental Fag
A straight guy who is attracted to someone he thinks is a woman, but... is... not... quite.
Yeah, that guy was really hot for the editor of Piss Clear, *but it turns out he was just being an accidental fag.*

Burnocrat
Any form-, rule-, or guideline-obsessed Burning Man "official".
I hear that the organizers used to have more fun out here, before they all had to become burnocrats.

Darwin's Bastards
Idiots that would die out on the playa, if not for the fine work of the Black Rock Rangers and the Washoe County Sheriff, but instead are allowed to pollute the gene pool of Black Rock City.
Every year, there seem to be more and more of Darwin's bastards coming out to Burning Man.

Dusters
People who constantly try to wipe the dust off their new tech vests bought at Old Navy or The Gap ten minutes before they headed out to the Black Rock Desert.
If a big storm kicks up, those dusters will be the first ones to flee.

Fresh Meat
Any unattended dog or child on the playa.
Look at all that fresh meat! Now where the hell did I put my barbeque sauce!

Ghosts
Apparitions that emerge from their air-conditioned RV's only after the outside temperature dips below 85 degrees.
They say there are 20,000 people out here, but I swear, half of them must be ghosts.

Khaki Motherfucker
An overly authoritative Black Rock Ranger.
I'd have finished my art installation a lot sooner if I hadn't been interrupted every ten minutes by those khaki motherfuckers checking to see if my artwork was 'official' and up to code.

Plastic Buddy
A stinky plastic bag of garbage that ends up sitting next to you as drive off the playa on your way home.
If we had packed our food better before coming out here, we wouldn't be stuck driving all these plastic buddies home.

Pledge Break
Getting sucked into working for someone in the name of community effort.
We were almost off the playa, when we had to make one last pledge break to help push start some guy's 35-year-old VW bus.

Pork Chopper
That damn Washoe County Sheriff Department helicopter that keeps buzzing over Black Rock City.
I wish I had a rocket launcher to shoot down that pork chopper.

Wet-By-Fire
Women turned horny by the spectacle of the Burning Man.
With so many women wet-by-fire out here, even ugly people can score!

Zealots
Burning Man attendees, usually second-year, who treat the festival as a new religion, rather than as a mock religion.
Those fucking zealots, they call that *an opera? Although, I must admit, their enthusiasm is cute, in a naive way.*



Mock Religion is the Opiate of the Masses

by PERRY LANE

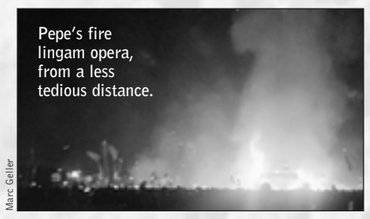
A lot of "experienced" Burning Man veterans are annoyed by first-year attendees, who they derisively call "virgins" or "freshmen." But to me, the most annoying people on the playa aren't the newbies, but the second-year crowd, many of whom I call "Zealots." Like the rest of us, Zealots are folks who had their minds blown away their first year but, for some reason, never the perspective needed to see that the powerful energy that surged them was simply a fleeting element of collective human behavior. Instead, they continually confuse it with something supernatural, and most likely, religious. They feel that they, in some way, have been *transformed,* and they continually try to *transform* everyone around them — in much the same way a new heroin junkie may try to turn-on all of their friends.

In Isreal, this form of hysteria is known as the "Jerusalem Syndrome," and occurs when a tourist — usually a Christian — is overwhelmed by the sublime properties of that officially Holy City. Probably the most famous American victim of this syndrome changed his name to David, and put on one hell of a fire performance in Texas a few years back.

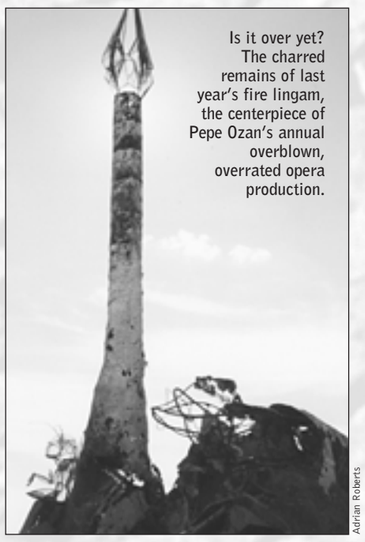
Getting their Burning Man fix

These Zealots are the worst kind of junkie. Sick for this Burning Man brand of endorphin rush, one week a year is simply not enough. They must find other ways to get their fix: attending post-parties, pre-parties, fund raisers, and film festivals. If none of these "mainline" events are available, then they must find some other way to get their high. If they're lucky, they'll find a group of people at a bar or a cafe talking about Burning Man. They'll sneak up next to them, join the conversation, and get a contact high. If they're unlucky, they must skin-pop the experience, by perching themselves in a corner at a party, bus stop, or train, and ramble on superficially about the deep impact of the event to anyone willing to listen. Failing that, they'll re-read back issues of *Piss Clear,* which they've secreted in their vest pocket in preparation for these hard-up times.

It's a depraved life that demands more and more. Fortunately, unlike heroin, it's very hard to overdose — at least fatally. About the closest you can come is to become a glorified khaki motherfucker (see *Playa Lingo*), complete with khaki sun hat and walkie talkie. Or, if you don't like telling people what to do, you can always help out with the opera.


Pepe's fire lingam opera, from a less tedious distance.

Marc Geller


Is it over yet? The charred remains of last year's fire lingam, the centerpiece of Pepe Ozan's annual overblown, overrated opera production.

Adrian Roberts

Did someone say opera?

An opera? In the desert? What a novel idea! Or at least that's what most people thought back in 1996, when *City of Dis,* Pepé Ozan's fire lingam opera production, took people's breaths away. Who knew then that it would become the new religion of the Burning Man festival? The Zealots, of course, will disagree with this, saying, "No, it's just a mock religion, not a *real* religion." But hey, a mock religion filled with dogma, ritual, and mythology is *still* religion. Sounds like a pretty good paradox. But, as those exposed to the decadence and pretension of last year's spectacle know, there is no good paradox involved in the opera. In fact, this paradox is pretty much aesthetically bankrupt and should be tarred and feathered and run out of town as an example to any that may follow.

So what *is* this opera?

If you take away this fluke of logic, along with the inanely repetitive music, the painted titties and testes, and the quasi-religious endorphin rush, then what is Pepé's fire lingam opera? I'll tell you. It's something between an elementary school costume parade and a church candle lighting service, only longer. Much, *much* longer.

So which muse was it who told Pepé to transform his fire lingam into a stage? Was it that same muse who talked him into doing it over and *over* again? And what about that giant windsailer that crashed into the lingam last year? Was it because the driver was tanked up on twelve martinis? Or was it Fate's way of saying that maybe there should never be another fire lingam opera on the playa?

But perhaps Pepé is simply heeding the words that a bad artist once said to another: "Be creative, but if you can't be creative, at least bore people with your pretense of creativity."

rant

Top 10 Albums for the Playa

by MALDEROR

music

1. **Talk Talk** — *Spirit of Eden.* The best chill-out album ever.
2. **Stone Roses** — *The Complete Stone Roses.* To start impromtu dances at the Gerlach gas station.
3. **Shriekback** ▶ *Sacred City.* For sitting under the Man and watching Black Rock City's lights.



4. **Emmylou Harris** — *Wrecking Ball.* Beautifully sparse.
5. **The Freestylers** — *We Rock Hard.* Guaranteed to get your party started.
6. **The Chemical Brothers** ▶ *Exit Planet Dust.* For the Boom.



7. **Ennio Morricone** — *Once Upon a Time in the West* soundtrack. For the grandeur.
8. **New Model Army** — *Thunder & Consolation.* For the raging politics of individuality.
9. **Simple Minds** — *Live in the City of Light.* Big music for a big space.
10. **Dreamspy** — *Assignment Earth.* Tripped out surf-techno.

haiku *by BRYAN FINCH*

Where's the
fucking guns?
Where's the drive-by
shooting range?
Where's my drug dealer?

Piss in the porta-john
Piss on the dusty playa
Just always piss clear

I'll burn in the day
I'll burn at dusk
and at dawn
I'll burn in the night

Winds blow so
damn strong
So many damn cameras
Winds fuck 'em up good

Know The Signs

Ah, what could have been. You know those signs that are posted along the road as you entered Black Rock City? They could have said so much more. Here are just a few more rejected sign ideas, courtesy of Mark Casino of www.cardhouse.com

IF GOD HAD WANTED US TO BE NAKED, HE WOULDN'T HAVE LET US INVENT CLOTHES

STRIP STEAKS $5.99 AT THE NUGGET! LOOSEST SLOTS IN THE FUCKING KNOWN UNIVERSE!

FOR THE LOVE OF ALL THAT IS HOLY, PLEASE STOP SAYING "RADICAL SELF-EXPRESSION"

WEEOOOH! THANK GOD YOU GOT THAT S.U.V., HUH?

WHEN I HEAR THE WORDS "TEMPORARY AUTONOMOUS ZONE," I REACH FOR MY POCKETBOOK

FUCK IT, LET'S ALL JUST STORM RENO

DID YOU BRING ENOUGH FOR EVERYONE?

WE DON'T HAVE ANY MORE "OLD MEN FILMING NAKED SHOWER BABES" PASSES TODAY

I SHOULD HAVE WENT TO JAPAN INSTEAD

EVERYONE ENJOYS LOOKING AT YOUR NAKED BODY. SERIOUSLY... *EVERYONE.*

FUCK RENT

DO IT FOR AMERICA

THERE IS SEX TO BE HAD IN THE DESERT. CAUTION: SOME OF IT IS BAD SEX.

BURNING MAN WAS MUCH BETTER LAST YEAR

LOCK-DOWN 10 PM SHARP

THIS IS THE APEX OF CAPITALISM. EAT IT UP.

DID YOU REMEMBER TO BRING: WATER?

PLEASE HAVE YOUR TICKET READY, OR MAYBE ONE OF OUR SPUNKY GREETERS CAN TRY TO FISH IT OUT OF YOUR PANTS

THE OFFICE CALLED, THEY SAID YOU'RE FIRED. I HOPE THAT'S OKAY.

BLACK ROCK SANITATION: "YEAH YEAH, KEEP YOUR PANTS ON, WE'RE COMING"

— Ted Casino of www.cardhouse.com

I remember when...

... if you came out for a week, you were hardcore.

... the coolest things on the playa were the explosions and the costumes.



Adrian Roberts

... they burned the Man on Sunday night.

... you could go to the hot springs.

.... showing up on Friday night didn't seem like you were arriving late.

... Rave Camp was three guys and a sound system. (They still went all night long though.)

... I stopped having to explain what Burning Man was to "normal" people.

... there was no opera.

... you could burn your own art without having to ask for permission.

— by Malderor and Playa Kitten

WHAT'S OUT	WHAT'S IN
alchohol	GHB
body paint	Liquid Latex™
bringing your roommate	bringing your mom
bullhorns	talkabouts
burning the Man	blowing up the Man
burning the Man late and calling in sick	burning the Man early and getting back to work on time
Craig Breedlove	Larry Harvey
croquet	lawn darts
frat boys	Burning Man Earth Guardians
glow sticks	electroluminescent wire
going to Burning Man	going to Egypt
guns	paintball
hay bales	bleacher seating
land yachts	flying dinosaurs
mass food giveaways	mass Ecstasy giveaways
Piss Clear	Piss & Wiggle
Playa Phone	PlayaNet
playa badmitton	playa volleyball
refridgerated spaces	tanning salons
science fiction cults	voodoo cults
space	time
Temple of Atonement	Oracle of Atonement
toliet paper	baby wipes
toothpaste w/baking soda	playa dust and water
windstorms	thunderstorms

— list compiled by Mike Connor, Dave Dawson, Penfold, Dennis Hinkamp, Playa Kitten, Teiwaz, and Ggreg Taylor

Travel Tips

by GAVIN HECK

Caffeine/ephedrine/whatever are not substitutes for sleep. If you start hallucinating from lack of sleep, pull over, soon.

travel

Be sure to pack the more bizarre/conspicuous things on the bottom, just in case you get pulled over.

Try to dress as inconspicuously as possible.



Adrian Roberts

When/if you get pulled over, don't say that you went to Burning Man. Say instead that you simply "went camping with some friends." (Okay, 20,000 friends.)

Be polite, say "Yes sir" and "No sir," and look them in the eyes. (But don't stare like Charles Manson.) They can sense fear like animals.

Avoid stopping in Wyoming. Driving through, we just got a really, *really* bad feeling there. It made Utah seem liberal. Of course, the Matthew Shepard killing kind of cinches it. In my limited experience of dealing with people in Wyoming, they don't really seem to like anybody "different."

Funny story about Wyoming though: We got stopped there by a pig after being followed for about twenty miles. Something about "van came up registered as a truck." (Yeah, right.) Somehow, my travelling companion ended up telling the cop about Burning Man, and how we had driven this van full of five virtual strangers across the country and we were heading back. After the nice officer finished grilling him, I was up. The question of the moment was, "How can I be sure that there are no drugs in this van?"

My answer? "I think we did them all out there, sir."

He laughed. He let us go.

Rumors, Hell!

by GGALLIN13

Another year has come and gone, and here I am again at Burning Man. The shade is up, the ice in my coolers is melting, drum circles are going, and there are naked middle-aged guys on bikes everywhere you look. Sure, things look exactly as they have for the past several years here in Black Rock City — but, in fact, there is a sinister undercurrent that threatens the very foundation of our community!

What I'm referring to, of course, is the Rumor Mill. Oh sure, I like to gossip as much as the next guy, speculating on future changes to this beloved little festival. But let's use a little common sense, people! I wish I knew where people get the crap they believe in (besides books), but I am going to do my best to once and for all lay these pathetic little Black Rock Legends to rest!

rumor mill

MTV is *not* here

MTV VJ Kennedy is not riding around with a camera crew. Nor has she ever. MTV has no interest in Burning Man. Why would they? Look at the shit they promote everyday — do you really think that anyone camped around you is in the MTV demographic? As much as I might personally enjoy it, a huge group of Midwestern high school girls will not, and probably never will, be joining us any time soon. MTV already has Spring Break, Woodstock (look how well *that* went), and whatever else normal people are into.

In fact, MTV has done its best to marginalize most of the people who find Burning Man to be any fun. They don't even play heavy metal music anymore, and your average Ozzy/Pantera/Slayer fest draws more people than Burning Man, and MTV doesn't get involved at all. And the metal crowd (there are some here, talk to them, they're fun!) is a way bigger segment of society than just about any group represented here. So, forget about MTV screwing this all up — but watch out for them in real life!

Beer company sponsorships? Not.

Beer companies/conglomerates are not coming. Only a sucker would come out here and try to vend anything. In fact, I think it would be hilarious for them to try! They would have to prevent us from bringing in our own beer or soda (impossible), as well as provide their own cooling systems for the kegs, etc. This logistical nightmare is just too large for any company worth a damn to bother. There's a NASCAR race or football game somewhere that does their marketing job just fine.

Besides, they're selling plenty of beer anyway. How much do you have in *your* cooler? I thought so. As it is, the store keeps it cold and vends it for them. As you can see, they already have a pretty good system mapped out for getting their slice of your Burning Man dollar.

Killer Ideas for Next Year

by ANDY WING

So, you're out here, surrounded by all these fabulous theme camps, all this cool art, all this amazing creativity, and you're thinking to yourself, "I'm lame. I didn't bring anything cool out to the desert." But two words keep running through your mind: next year.

ideas

But what to do? Well, we here at *Piss Clear* have made it easy for you, with this handy-dandy idea list. Of course, we're way too lazy to try pulling off any of these ideas ourselves, but perhaps you'll be more motivated than us next year. We've done the brainstorming — the rest is up to you. Good luck!

Black Rock Computing Center
Nothing more modern than an original IBM PC running DOS 1.1 would be permitted. Bring on the Apple IIs, TRS-80s, Atari 800s, Wang 2600s and even Altairs and Rockwells. PDP-8s and System 360s would make it a true 'super' computing center. Fire up Visi-Calc, Sargon, Adventure, Star Trek, or just sit down and crash the machines!

Flamin' Gong
Two performers with flaming mallets smash a gong in a pounding rhythm while two concentric circles of dancers join hands or link arms and follow along in a retrograde motion. The mallet wielders stand in an inch deep reflecting pool. Loud, thumping, and obnoxious samplaholic music accompanies the whole thing.

Humbleweeds
Light, seemingly frail, geodesic balls are scattered around the playa. By day, they blow around or are carried to and fro. By night, they are lit up by kerosene-soaked rags suspended in the middle by wire and rolled to and fro. They are anonymous and subject to the whims of the desert dwellers.

Burning Highway to Nowhere
So *this* is where Interstate 0 is! Antarctica, next exit. Three Way Traffic Ahead. Playa Chicken Crossing.

The Burning Klan
Effigies in white hoods get a taste of the flames themselves.

Giant Lava Lamp
A hundred gallons of benzyl alcohol should make for a spectacular blaze on Saturday night!

Babarella
A silly looking space elephant with a set of couches on her back. Fully mobile.

Burning Books
Forget literary content — burn copies of the federal budget, badly-written user manuals, obsolete/over-priced college technical texts, unsolicited junk from "recycle bin fodder of the month" book clubs.

The Hard Cock Cafe
The Girlie Grrrls meet their match!

Ten Cent Vinyl Revival Camp
A loud PA coupled with a few kiddie phonos and a rack of effects. Bring on those transcriptions! Need we say more?

Torture Me Elmo
The Muppet Hellraiser!

Giant Lego Camp
Cardboard blocks two feet long, all interlocking.

Tumbleweed Tent Camp
Their tents are purposely unstaked. Wherever the wind carries them, they camp for the night.



www.deuceofclubs.com

Corporate America *is* here

It certainly fits the pervasive, money-grubbing capitalist myth that "they" are scheming to step in and somehow make money on this event, but there is no money to be made. Most of the people I meet will give you whatever they have to spare if you need it, just because you asked. I know I'm that way, and you should be, too. How can you possibly expect to make money in that sort of environment? It seems to be human nature for groups to have an enemy, so they can feel that there is a reason for their grouping together. For many of us out here, our common enemy seems to be "Corporate America." Well, listen, Corporate America built your car, sold you your stereo, made your tent, fabricated that ugly blue tarp — in effect, they are in everything everywhere out here — except for what you make yourself. And even then, they made the art supplies you used to make whatever it is you made. So there. We would all be hand-pumping the porta-potties ourselves if not for Corporate America, so cut them a little respect if for no other reason than that.

Who cares what the Man means?

The last, and in my opinion, the dumbest myth of them all revolves around the Man itself. Whether it represents Larry Harvey's grandmother or seventh grade teacher or ex-lover or Satan or whatever, how does that possibly concern you? I have been coming out here for eight years, and I've never even *met* Larry Harvey. Do you have to talk to Picasso or know his motivations to enjoy his paintings? No. The art stands on its own, period. If you want to believe that we're all worshiping Satan in our own small way (well, at my camp we are) or that we're all into the Grateful Dead as much as you are (okay, we aren't), then go for it. But don't pass your perspective on things as right or true — isn't that what people in normal society do that bugs you so much? Hmmmmm?

I'm sure there will be more rumors, more wild speculation, and more Fear of Money, but try to think about these things before you accept them at face value. Stick to the facts, as they are interesting enough. For example, the Man *will* burn on Saturday, and I *will* get lost on Friday night. So there.

You Know You're a Clueless Burning Man Newbie When...

by HERNAN CORTEZ

... on the way to Burning Man, you eat all your Oreos and Doritos, then drink those two six-packs of beer that you thought would be enough.

.... you arrive on Tuesday morning and naively announce, "Hey, these porta-johns ain't so bad!"

... you fail to put that note up on the bulletin board, telling your friends where you're camped.

... you ask strangers to sell you drugs, even though you look like you're from Langley, Virginia.

... you come to the realization that drinking a gallon of water each day is a royal pain in the ass. So you stop drinking water.

... you walk around asking women to show you their tits!

... you carry rotten fruit around, to pelt those idiots who ask you to show them your tits!

... you steal mementos from every camp.

... using the rope you cut from some stranger's tent, you get a willing volunteer to hold the other end, so you can mow down those pesky stilt walkers.

... you then go around bragging about it.

... you pick up items with fuses attached, "to get a better look."

... you try to jump on the rocket car, as it passes you by at 60 mph.

... you think that everyone likes getting woken up at the crack of dawn, despite the fact that they may have fallen asleep just thirty minutes ago.

... you doze off after a lunch time food quaffing, spread-eagled like a starfish in the blazing sun. You awake three hours later — you're the color of crab sticks — and you're unable to move.

... you get bored, so you break a rib! After all, a helicopter ride is t he best part about Burning Man.

... on Saturday afternoon you finally get into the spirit of the thing, giving away a pint of water to that crusty raver type that you know must be from Mars.

... you enjoyed *that* so much, that two hours later you work up the nerve to give a can of Coors Lite to that naked guy in blue body paint.

... you never, *ever* mention that you only brought with you one bag of lemon drops, two bags of vending machine Fritos, and a six-pack of Bud.

... you buy $3 bottles of beer from some hucksters, at least six times.

... you pass out at the base of the Man, around 6 p.m. on Saturday, with your pants down around your knees. When BM veterans mutter, "He's *really* wasted!" it becomes the highlight of your Burning Man experience.

... you sacrifice something valuable to those porta-potty pyramids that arise over the toilet seat on Saturday night. Sunglasses, wedding rings, and cameras are always popular. You hope that it will bring you good luck.

... you decide — at about 4 a.m. on Sunday morning — that the groove in Black Rock City is just sooooooo cool, that you're going to stay here all year.